

COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
Brownfields Redevelopment
Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 12, 2014 (10:04 am)

888-494-4032

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I. Welcome

Kimberly Wasserman – Chairman, EJ Commission

Dr. Sylvia Hood-Washington– Sub-committee co-chair

II. Introductions

A. Teleconference

- Kim Wasserman, LVEJO
- Dr. Sylvia Hood-Washington
- Ken Page, IEPA
- Chris Pressnall, IEPA
- Sharonda Williams, IEPA
- Veronica Kyle, Faith in Place
- Tamika Gibson, Illinois Environmental Council
- Jerry Mead-Lucero- PERRO
- Alec Messina, IERG

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion- Kim Wasserman

Second- Dr. Washington

Motion Carried

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. February 26, 2014

Dr. Washington- Submitted comments to Ken regarding 501(c) (3) conversation.

Motion- Alec Messina moved to approve the minutes with 501(c) (3) language added.

Second- Veronica Kyle

Motion Carried

V. Old Business

A. Brownfield's Redevelopment

1. Is there a need for additional funding for the Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant (MBRG)?

2. Should the MBRG be expanded to include community groups and NGO's (it is now only for municipalities)

3. Other

- Page, IEPA- There was a lot of discussion around grants and what are the requirements. There were no questions and so I thought I would throw out these ideas. From the discussion lack of funding was highlighted as well as opportunities available outside of municipalities.
- Dr. Washington- Had a conversation with Lara Lasky from U.S. EPA Region 5. There are Superfunds located right outside of Winfield and there are Brownfields in Aurora. We need to educate communities about Brownfields and how it can have an impact on their health. How do we facilitate discussion with the community around this issue?
- Kyle, Faith in Place- There is a serious lack of education when it comes to Brownfields. Lack of education is a justice issue. When people have knowledge they can advocate and explore their options. We can get incubated as government agencies and industry. Education needs to be at the forefront.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- The reason that the subcommittee was set up is because our communities all have Brownfields. How do we jumpstart Brownfields Redevelopment throughout the state? What are other factors outside of funding? Kim do you have any insight from conversations with your New York partners?
- Dr. Washington- Is education not fundamental?
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- It is. We all are listing what we think is important.
- Dr. Washington- Two things are happening in this conversation. There are communities that are inside of a Brownfields site and can't move forward to remediate that site. We want other communities to move forward to where LVEJO and PERRO are. There is a lack of knowledge and these issues have direct impacts to people's health. This issue shouldn't be pushed to the backburner. We need to educate communities about what that impact is.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- Can we look at other cities and States for guidance? There seem to be three avenues of interest: Education on Brownfields (How can we work with state agencies on this); Community led initiatives, and look at other states for guidance. This is in addition to Ken's question provided in the agenda. Am I missing a bigger question that we need to address?
- Page, IEPA- Please explain community led initiatives.

- Wasserman, LVEJO- In Little Village there are currently city led initiatives around open space. Looking at Brownfields along with the city are there ways that communities can engage in Brownfield redevelopment and give that community perspective.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- In New York there is a lot of public action around Brownfield Redevelopment that spurs job creation. There is an assumption that nothing will happen without private investment. Can we work more with the public sector around Brownfields?
- Dr. Washington- Ultimately you are speaking about the community having ownership and power. But how many communities have cognizance of being in a Brownfield site? There should be maps of Brownfields sites available to the community. Winfield is less than fifteen miles from largest Superfund area in Illinois. Yet there was no communication to Winfield of a recent meeting.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- How do we encompass this as a part of our work? Not having a mapping tool is part of the problem.
- Dr. Washington- According to Lara Lasky at U.S. EPA, Region 5 we can map this information. We need to see what is happening here before looking at New York. For ten years I have created environmental justice courses and I would have students go on the USEPA website to put in their zip code and find out what was in the area. They needed a graduate education for this exercise.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- As a Commission we should address the mapping point. How do we break down information to make it accessible? In California they have mapping tools available for citizens.
- Dr. Washington- Usually when communities access these tools they have knowledge of the concerns. In Illinois there are communities that don't know there are concerns.
- Kyle, Faith in Place- One of the things that I try to do is look at examples of community based Brownfields work in the rest of the nation. One example is the American Planning Association. They have information about educating the community called Brownfields Basics. They provide an overview of community based Brownfields Redevelopment. They also look at community visioning and teach Brownfields Finance 101. I believe funding was also mentioned in this conversation.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- Funding has two levels. The base initiative needs funding and even existing programs are short on funds.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- Do we want to let **department (Is she speaking about BOL?)** know where they are and offer recommendations? Or do we want to tackle the three initiatives we

have listed? We can also send questions to IEPA and then re-engage.

- Page, IEPA- On the education side there is a misconception about Brownfields. That term is used a catch-all. The agency has GIS capabilities that will bring up Brownfields, LUST sites etc. Education is extremely important. With the funding issue it doesn't always come down to the State. Sometimes community groups and faith based groups have leverage with grants and other sources of funding.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- Is there a mapping tool at IEPA available that is similar to TRI but for Brownfields?
- Page, IEPA- You are using Brownfields generically. We have mapping tools that bring up LUST sites, Superfund sites etc.
- Dr. Washington- If we could gather this information for communities it would be great. Distinguishing sites that are being remediated for economic development vs. environmental health concerns is also important.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- Nothing exists right now but could this tool be developed?
- Page, IEPA- It exists. I am not sure how it would look.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- Can I go on the web right now and look up that information?
- Page, IEPA- You can go to the LUST database and pull up sites in any given location.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- There is no specific site to look up Brownfields because it is a big term. You can go on IL EPA's website and look at maps but you would have to know the terminology and what you are looking for.
- Dr. Washington- There is potential to create something that pulls all of this information together. There are resources available to create an educational portal to distinguish difference between Superfunds, LUST etc.
- Messina, IERG- If you go to BOL on the IEPA website there is a link for GIS data. That tool utilizes Google Earth. You can look for LUST and SRP sites as well as drill down based on location.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- Let's address whether folks understand what this even means. Are there groups in this space that can share this information with community members? Mapping could be a tool to relay information. In Pilsen we have a portal on U.S. EPA's website that shows us the different sites in our community. If it can be accomplished on that level maybe we can do it for the whole state.
- Dr. Washington- We received funding to create an oral history project. We spoke to people in environmentally compromised neighborhoods. We worked with congregations and discovered that the level of understanding of environmental justice is lacking.

People looked at a film and received a booklet to convey information about environmental justice. The booklet was created for a 6-12 year old reading level. This project occurred from 2002-2006. I am concerned that we haven't moved to a point where this information is available to everyone not just to savvy environmental groups. Since this information is in different places let's create a portal to gather all of it. In this portal the information will range from base level to sophisticated.

- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- The links that were referred to earlier aren't written in language that is basic enough. Also if you don't have Google Earth installed then you can't access the information. How can we make this better?
- Wasserman, LVEJO- A portal for the community to understand environmental justice and what is happening in the state is important. We need to be conscious of community perspective. Ken what is the possibility of a community portal that is user-friendly?
- Page, IEPA- We will look at what exists and how it works. I will share that information with the Commission and we can build upon it. IEPA will have an internal discussion about a portal and we can share that information with the Commission so that they can provide feedback.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- Another issue is outreach. Historically there has been a lack of outreach when it comes to public comments and hearings. We need to know when meetings are coming up so that we can provide comments. This is an issue I want to be addressed.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- My experience with U.S. EPA in regard to EJ 2014 might be an example of how we can engage with IEPA about what community engagement looks like.
- Page, IEPA- EJ 2014 is not a part of this discussion since U.S. EPA is not on this call.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- There needs to be more conversation between Region 5 and the State. There is no need for anyone to do more work. It is good to find opportunities for collaboration to see if there are actions already happening that are compatible with what the State is doing.
- Dr. Washington- This portal idea would allow us to reach all of the priorities that we have listed on this call. Regardless of urban, suburban or agrarian communities.
- Page, IEPA- We need to see how this translates to all of the state agencies. This goes beyond IEPA.
- Dr. Washington- It is not just about IEPA. Multiple agencies have to be involved in the creation of the portal.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- What are the resources out there? Can you share them with us?
- Page- We will discuss internally and get you that information.

- Dr. Washington- Can you reach out to other agencies that you think will be key?
- Wasserman, LVEJO- I will reach out to U.S. EPA so that we don't duplicate efforts.
- Dr. Washington- Department of Public Health will be a key agency.
- Page, IEPA- We will discuss with other state agencies to determine what they have available.
- Messina- Well testing information is available online. That is a starting point for working with other agencies.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- The link that Veronica mentioned that looks at Brownfields Basics is information we should review. If we can look at examples of basic information out there it can help us with this portal. Veronica can you please send me that information and I will share it with the Commissioners.
- Kyle, Faith in Place- The Environmental Law Institute's Brownfield Tool Kit is also a good resource. Even if you have things in place this kit provides a good checklist of what already exists and what you can adopt.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- We now have a list of priorities. (1) Community led Redevelopment; (2) Education Portal and (3) Funding for future redevelopment initiatives.
- Washington- We need to speak with Cheryl about what they are doing. In the community.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- I need to speak with Cheryl about the work they are doing and her attendance at these meetings.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- The next meeting at large is in a week. Is it possible to get information prior to that meeting or does it make more sense to provide a summary to the Commission?
- Page, IEPA- What information specifically?
- Wasserman, LVEJO- Web portal information. I think we are better off providing a summary and soon after looking at what exists and discuss web portal.
- Mead-Lucero, PERRO- Maybe we can do a demonstration at the full Commission meeting of the tool that is currently available. We won't have a detailed plan of the portal but we can show the Commissioners what exists and see how we can build on it.
- Page, IEPA- I think it needs to be hashed out by the subcommittee before it is presented to the full Commission.
- Messina, IERG- Agencies may need to mull over this discussion before recommendations come forward.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- To your point Jerry my only concern is that the State comes and says that the suggestions aren't possible right now. We want to hear back from agencies first about what is possible. I do recommend that folks look up their zip code and see

what is out there. We want to hear back from Ken about what is possible and then go from there.

- Wasserman, LVEJO- I will bring my laptop to the full Commission meeting next week and folks can look at information prior to the call of afterwards. We will share links with the full Commission so they can look at information beforehand. If they also want to look at the information at the meeting I will bring my laptop so people can do that.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- I would like Commission members to look at the links provided and give suggestions. I will speak to Dr. Washington and Cheryl Johnson and try to provide information about co-chairs for group before the full Commission meeting.
- Wasserman, LVEJO- We will work on a brief one paragraph summary of what has happened in the subcommittee and what is next.
- Mead- Lucero, PERRO- Is there a website that has the minutes for the EJ Commission?
- Page, IEPA- the EJ Commission webpage on the IEPA website has all approved minutes and additional information about the Commission.

VI. Discussions/Presentations:

VII. Next meeting date and location

Next subcommittee meeting will be scheduled at the full Commission meeting on March 20, 2014.

VIII. Adjournment

11:30 a.m.